

## Eavesdropping on Modern Times

**W**HEN LYNDON BAINES Johnson, driven from Washington by war and unrest, opened his presidential library in Austin in 1971, he said, in his inimitable Texas drawl, that he wanted the history of his life and times to be written "with the bark off." That's the way NEWSWEEK likes history, too. From time to time we publish excerpts from groundbreaking accounts of the passions and players that have shaped the century. With books like "The Final Days," Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's 1976 recounting of the tortuous end of Richard Nixon's presidency, our excerpts have given readers an indispensable window on contemporary history. It was in NEWSWEEK that Americans first read Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf's rapid-fire memoir of the gulf war and former secretary of defense Robert McNamara's controversial apology ("We were wrong, terribly wrong") for his part in the Vietnam War. (And when it comes to First Ladies, we've excerpted both Nancy Reagan and Hillary Rodham Clinton.) In 1995 Microsoft CEO Bill Gates brought a new twist with his memoir of the future, "The Road Ahead."

This week we continue the tradition with not one but two exclusive excerpts. The first is from Michael R. Beschloss's

MELISSA KAY COHEN



Michael Beschloss



Esther Dyson

"Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-64." LBJ was the only president to record his conversations from his first day in office, and Beschloss, one of the country's leading presidential historians, transcribed and edited the first 240 hours (of a total of 643) of the private, freewheeling Johnson. Sometimes personal and profane, the conversations we publish here are drawn from one of the most significant 12-month periods in post-World War II politics—the year that began

with John F. Kennedy's murder and included the beginnings of our escalating involvement in Vietnam and the passage of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964.

Esther Dyson's "Release 2.0," a portion of which appears in FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY, defies easy classification. Chairman of EDventure Holdings, which publishes the influential computer-industry newsletter Release 1.0, Dyson was one of the first to closely chronicle the rise of the personal computer. She's known in the online world for her idiosyncratic take on digital culture. Part intellectual diary of early days of the PC revolution, part "design for living in the digital age," her book is an outsider's inside view of how computers and the Internet have changed—and will yet change—our lives.